

Self Care

A scenic view of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The water is a vibrant blue, and the sand is a light tan color. The sky is a deep blue with some white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

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Disclosure Statement

The presenter of this lecture does not have any relationship with industry or any commercial interests that might affect the presentation, and therefore has nothing to disclose.

Objectives

1. Promote an understanding of the importance of self-care.
2. Develop a personal plan for self care.
3. Explain basic biophysiology of stress.
4. Explore the work of Robert J. Wicks.



Roads to Soul Injury

- Moral distress
- Compassion fatigue
- Secondary stress
- Over-identification
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Boredom
- Failure
- Burn Out



Professional Grief

Crying and overt demonstrations of grief are most commonly due to perceived inadequacies and a sense of failure.

(Freeman, 2015)



Personal Responsibility

- We must acknowledge the personal responsibility we have to care for ourselves.
- There is a direct correlation between your morale and your absenteeism.
- Communication is just as important between you and management as it is between you and your patients.
- We all need to feel we are being listened to, appreciated, and respected.
- Our perceived failures must be addressed.
- Burn out is the last straw, it must be addressed early before it grows.

Burnout=Severe Soul Injury

Requires a culmination of events.

Often results in a decision to leave, abandon self and others

- Quit
- Transfer
- Withdraw
- Become cold and mechanical

Quality is compromised.

(Wicks, 2006 & Freeman, 2015)

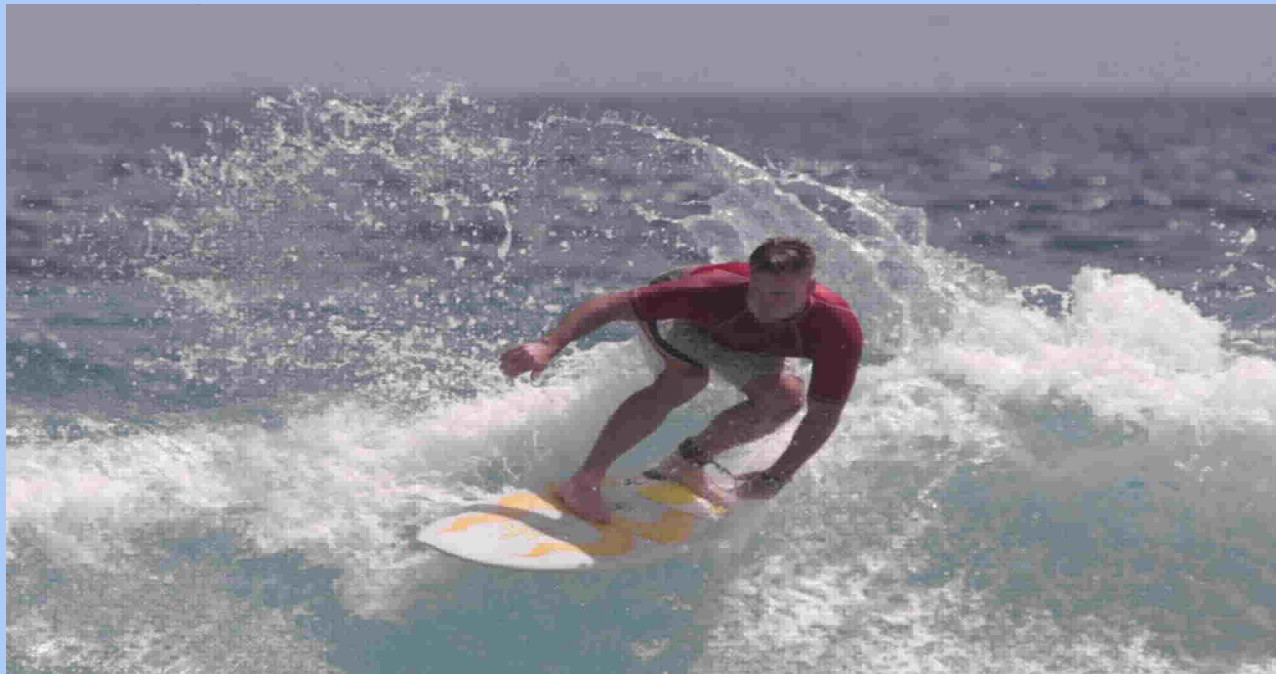


Classic Symptoms of Soul Injury

- Mental fatigue, especially at the end of the day.
- Tense feelings, boredom, frustration, and or anger toward patients and co-workers.
- Experiencing new physical symptoms.
- Perceiving ones personal and professional resources are inadequate.
- Job requirements are perceived as repetitious, beyond ones ability, and/or physically or emotionally depleting.

(Wicks, 2006)

“The seeds of burnout and the seeds of enthusiasm are in reality the same seeds, anyone who truly cares can expect to ride the waves of burnout- and occasionally get knocked down by a wave they missed.” (Wicks, 2006, p.26)







Anton Chekov once proclaimed:

“Any idiot can face a crisis- it’s the day-to-day living that wears you out.”

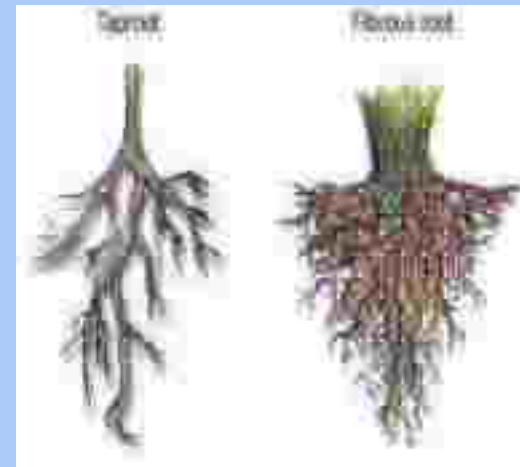


“If the temperature of the bath rises one degree every ten minutes, how will the bather know when to scream?” (Wicks,2006)



“Health care is one of the few professions where it is socially acceptable to ignore your family, your non-work life, and yourself.”

It is not the demands of our jobs, but rather our compulsive character that is the root of the problem.



(Wicks, 2006)

Health Care Dilemma

- Promotes **emotional detachment** necessary for rational clinical decision making.
- Recognizes the **need to identify** with patients for real empathy.



(Wicks, 2006)

Become Self-Aware

Ability to empathize is essential

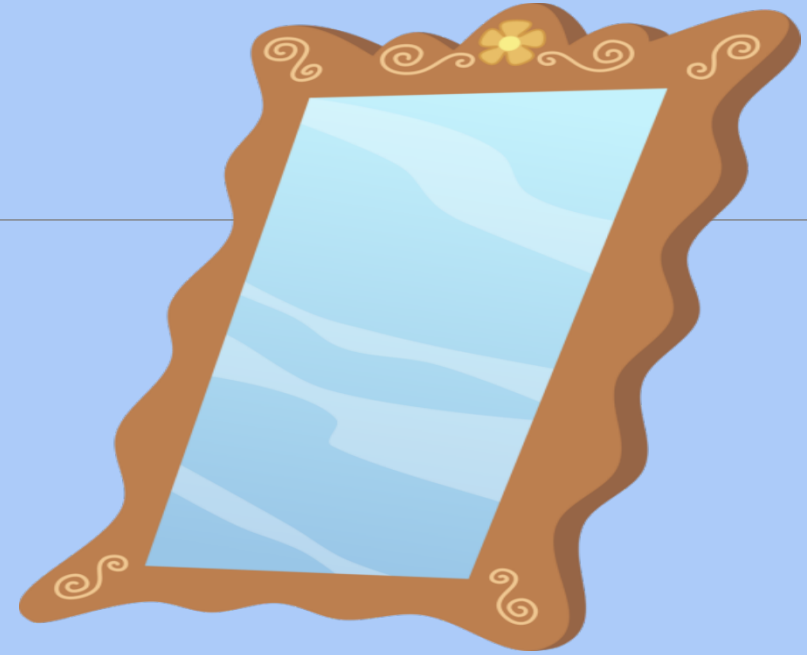
- Must see ourselves in our patients
- Forces us to confront our vulnerability
- Forces us to acknowledge statistical likelihood

Recognize our vulnerability.

- Appreciate the daily wear and tear of patient interactions.
- Providing holistic patient care is as physically and emotionally depleting as the disease is to a patient.

Make time for rest, restoration, and rejuvenation of body and spirit.

(Wicks, 2006)



An Injured Soul

Results from the emotional pressure from reaching out to others in need

- Identified as secondary stress
- Constant and continuous
- Reality in medical and nursing professions
- Due to the need to accept unfortunate outcomes
 - Medical Model does not apply when caring for the terminally ill and dying
 - Care must be PERSONAL
- Overwhelmed by frustration
- Loss of perspective when encountering inevitable failures.



“For every poisoned worker there are a dozen with sub-clinical toxicity.”

(Wicks, 2006)

Neurobiology of Stress

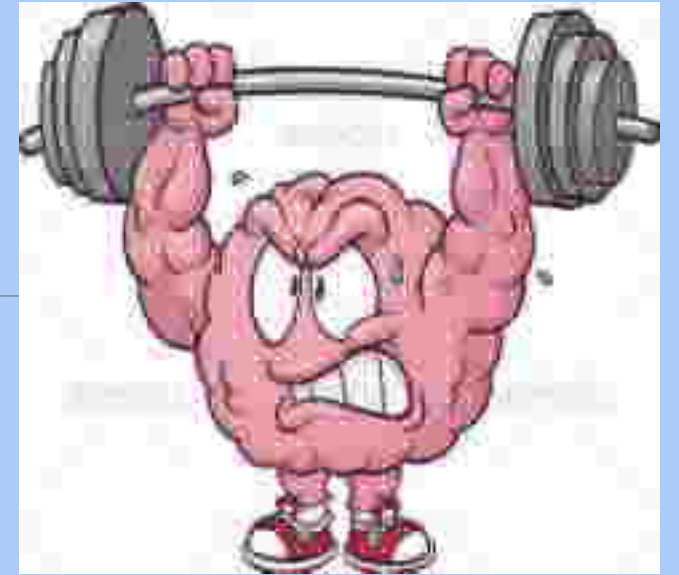
Brain is the central organ of stress and adaptation.

- Determines our behavioral and physiological responses.
- Target of stress and stressful experiences.

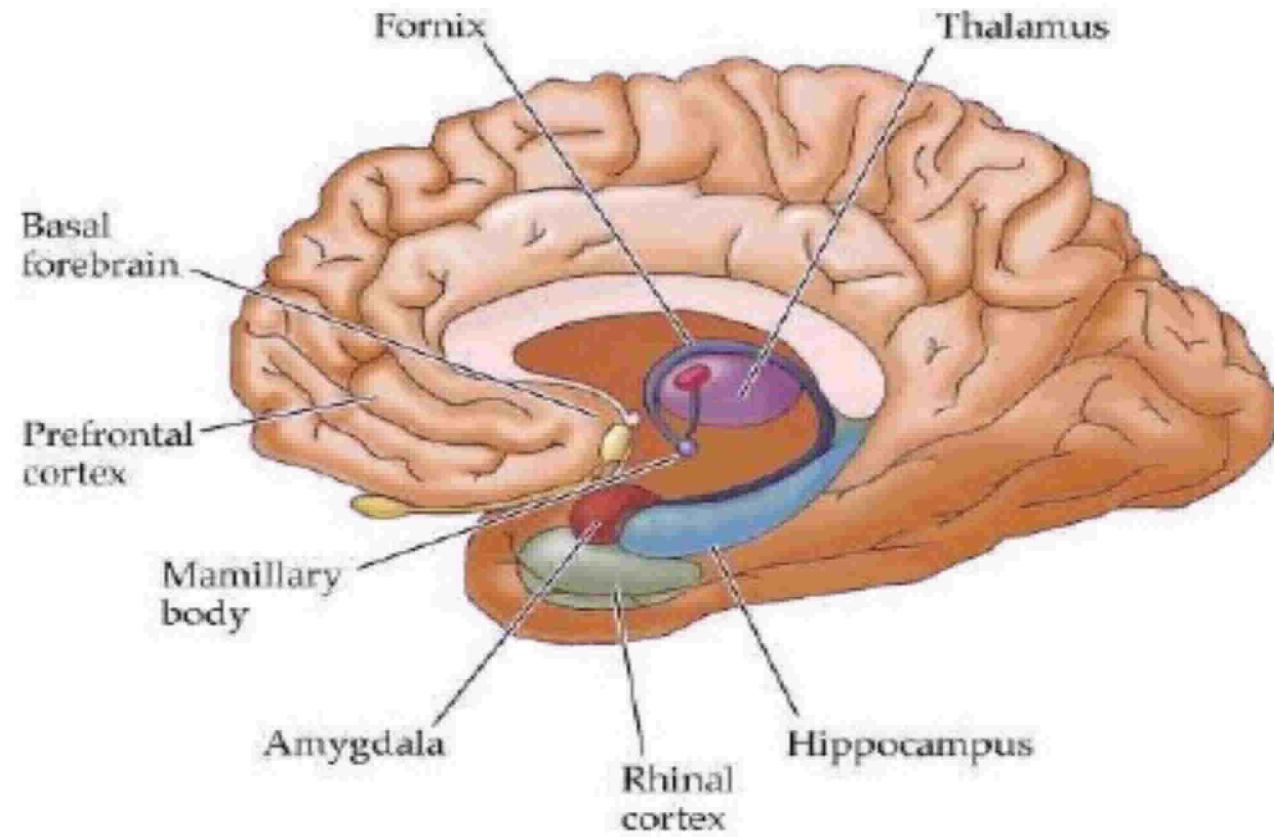
Brain function, architecture, and gene expression change with stress

- Allostasis
- Focus on hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex.
- Turned on efficiently when needed.
- Turned off promptly when not needed.

(McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2014)



Brain areas associated with declarative memory disorders



The Hippocampus

Shrinks in the presence of:

- Mild cognitive impairment
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Diabetes Type II
- Prolonged major depression
- Cushing's disease
- PTSD
- **Chronic stress**
- Chronic inflammation
- Lack of physical activity
- Jet lag



(McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2014)

Resilience

Achieving a positive outcome in the face of adversity

Bending but not breaking.

Recovering from a bad experience.

Possessing adequate coping mechanisms that function correctly during a time of trauma.

Dependent upon foundational capacity of the individual

- Early life experiences
- Cognitive flexibility
- Effective self regulation of behavior and physiological responses



(McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2014)

Find your JOY

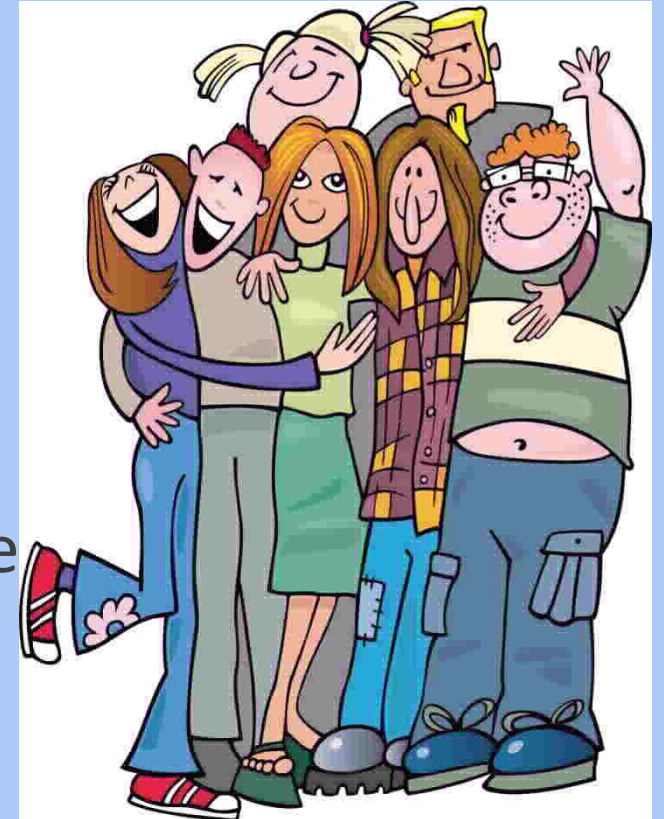


When was the last time you:

- DANCED
- SANG
- LAUGHED
- Did something artistic
- Did something just for you
- Slept more than 8 hours

Constructive Approaches to Minimize Soul Injury

- Find ways to positively vent and promote communication.
- Give genuine compliments.
- Seek creative solutions to problems.
- Help others in need.
- Utilize humor daily.
- Emphasize the importance of having joy in your life
- Take breaks off the unit/work area.
- Show appreciation for others. (Wicks, 2006)



Importance of Debriefing



“ The sharing and gaining of insight into personal frustrations, sadness, and loss can assist the caregiver to find meaning and personal growth from his or her experiences. Often, just the act of converting feelings into words can be healing.” (Freeman, 2015)

Self Care Pearls

- Do not believe the pedestal you have been placed upon.
- A power greater than you will decide your patient's fate.
- DO NOT EQUATE DEATH WITH FAILURE.
- Take comfort in knowing you did your very best.
- Learn to celebrate the journey.
- Review your day and give yourself quiet time.
 - Recognize parallels that lead to over-identification.
 - Identify unresolved grief.
 - Challenge yourself to understand why the event/situation was so upsetting.



Self-Care Pearls (cont)

- Stay in the present.
- Eat healthy, get your rest, and try to exercise.
- Find laughter and joy and make it a daily part of your life.
- Identify some meaning or growth from the experience.
- Learn to “Ride the Dragon”.
- Do not fear professional grieving for it is when the heart is most broken that we are the most open to change and personal growth.
(Wicks, 2006 & Freeman, 2015)

“...When all of life – both the perceived good and bad is faced directly with a sense of openness, life’s promises are more fully realized. Moreover, this is not only important for the person experiencing the struggles but also for those they may touch after absorbing the new lessons learned about gratitude, impermanence, the frailty of life, simplicity, meaning-making, and compassion.” (Wicks, 2006)



Riding the Dragon

“By facing the dragon of reality and truth about our lives, much unforeseen growth, depth, and promise becomes possible. No one wants to experience, and it is not easy to face, loss, trauma, serious stress, and loneliness. This is very true. However, if we can learn to ride our dragons rather than run, hide from, or attack them, it can be transforming.” (Wicks, 2006)

Conclusions

- Self care must include mindfulness and self-awareness of the baggage we all carry.
- Daily stressors add up like scalding water in a bath and we don't know when to scream.
- Group support, staying present, and accepting the limitations of care a nurse can provide can all assist in maintaining personal resiliency.
- We all need to stop running from the emotional pain caring for the dying can cause, and chose to ***“Ride the Dragon”***.
- If we are open to learn from our experiences and embrace the journey we can:
 - Learn about and embrace our personal strengths.
 - Understand how helplessness and loss can be faced with dignity.
 - Embrace how being vulnerable can open us up to self-acceptance.
 - Appreciate how humility can be the very door that leads to compassion.

(Wicks, 2006)

Find Your Joy!



References

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